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Farm Broadcasters Letter

Letter No. 2279

Sept. 11, 1986

SEC'Y LYNG
TO GATT TRADE
TALKS

USDA
NAT'L AGNCY, BUREAU OF
AGRICULTURE

JCT 21 '86

CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

CHINA'S SOYBEAN
PRODUCTION

Officials and trade representatives from 92 countries began meeting Sept. 15 in Punta del Este, Uruguay, to establish the agenda for the 8th round of trade negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Heading the U.S. delegation is Clayton Yeutter, the U.S. Trade Representative. Representing U.S. agriculture is Sec'y Richard Lyng. The goal of the Agricultural representatives is to make sure agricultural trade issues are included on the agenda, particularly such key issues as market access and competition, and specifically the use of export subsidies.

MALAYSIAN
SOYBEAN
IMPORTS

China's soybean production for 1986 is estimated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at 11 million tons, down from an earlier estimate of 11 million 500 thousand tons. The State Statistical Bureau of China officially estimated last year's soybean crop at 10 million 500 thousand tons.

THUNDER AT
THUNDER BAY

Malaysian imports of soybeans increased by 57 pct. during Oct. 1985 through May 1986, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. China captured half of these soybean sales, while the U.S. share was reduced from about 70 pct. in 1983 to the present 8 pct. USDA estimates Malaysian imports of soybeans for 1985/86 at 200,000 metric tons.

ARGENTINA
CULLS CATTLE
HERDS

Canadian grain handlers walked off the job over a salary dispute at Thunder Bay, a major Canadian grain loading facility. A significant quantity of grain is currently in the terminal. A short strike should have only a minimal effect on grain exports, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. However, a long walkout could substantially disrupt Canadian grain shipments.

Beef production in Argentina for 1986 is projected to fall about 40,000 tons to 2 million 700 thousand tons and fall another 50,000 tons next year due to the drop in slaughter cattle numbers. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Argentina is continuing to cull cattle herds. Cattle numbers are projected to fall about 2 pct. this year to 56 million 500 thousand head, and further declines are expected next year. The decline is caused by weak export prospects and heavy debt and tax burdens.

EC BEEF TO
BRAZIL

The European Community Commission has decided to make another sale of beef to Brazil of reportedly 100,000 tons, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This is the second large sale authorized for Brazil in 1986. The previous sale was also for 100,000 tons. The U.S. has an agreement with Brazil to sell 90,000 tons of beef, made available as a result of the dairy herd termination program. The EC sale should not have a direct impact on U.S. exports. However, it will serve to further weaken the already low international price for beef.

SOVIET
AGRICULTURE
STILL SLUGGISH

The Soviet Food Program, adopted in 1982, has not come close to achieving its ambitious aims. Midway through the Program, the Soviets are still not meeting their targets for increased food production. Grain production during the 11th Five-Year Plan, from 1981 to 1985, fell below output of the two preceding Five-Year Plans. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, what the Soviets may need is an entire overhaul or a new model built on market-based incentives, like the one that's spurred agricultural production in China. In the USSR, meaningful labor incentives are nearly nonexistent because quality consumer goods are in short supply and worker incomes tend to be equal despite differences in ability and effort.

EXPANDED HOURS
FOR SOME MEAT &
POULTRY PLANTS

Effective Oct. 14, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will allow qualified meat and poultry processing plants operating under the Total Quality Control inspection system to expand hours of operations from eight to a maximum of 12 hours. Meat and poultry plants under the voluntary Total Quality Control inspection system use USDA-approved quality control systems to ensure wholesome and accurately labeled products. Approximately 500 plants are approved to operate under this system.

SLOWLY BUT
SURELY

The farm sector is making the necessary adjustments to position itself for modest gains in the late 1980's and beyond, according to economists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The analysts recognize that the consequences of agriculture's financial stress are not over--that some farmers who held on through the last few years will be squeezed out in the next few, and that depressed rural communities cannot expect a quick recovery. However, they agree that a major portion of the underlying adjustments seem to have already been made. These include lower production costs and land values, a reduction in the sector's debt burden, more favorable dollar exchange rates on world markets and the implementation of policies designed to improve the competitiveness of U.S. export commodities.

F FARMS FROM
1959 - 1982

Farm production became more specialized from 1959 to 1982, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Some findings include: In 1959, 34 pct. of crop farms were cash grain farms; by 1982 that number had dropped to 26 pct ... Tobacco farm numbers dropped by 63 pct. with the largest decrease in farms with sales less than \$10,000 ... For general crop farms, crop cash receipts as a percentage of all cash receipts rose from 65 pct. in 1959 to 81 pct. in 1982 ... Only 8 pct. of general crop farms had sales of more than \$100,000, but these large farms accounted for 64 pct. of total cash receipts for general crop farms.

FROM OUR
TELEVISION
SERVICE

CURRENT WHEAT OUTLOOK...Although the 1986 wheat harvest was smaller, it added significantly to existing supplies. A record 4 billion bushels are available for the 1986/87 marketing year. USDA economist Allen Schienbein examines the current situation and outlook for wheat. Vic Powell interviews. (271)

1985 U.S. FARM POPULATION...Approximately 5.5 million people lived on U.S. farms in 1985, down seven percent from 5.8 million in 1984. USDA economist Judith Kalbacher focuses on factors contributing to the current outlook. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (272)

SHEEP MARKETING...Direct marketing is a popular practice used by farmers to sell their goods directly to the consumer. Katherine Tyler, a farmer from Baltimore County, Maryland, talks with "Farm Day's" Marilyn Maguire about her success in direct marketing. DeBoria Janifer introduces. (273)

ARS RESEARCH FEATURES...Agricultural research scientists are developing new varieties of lettuce through the Lettuce Germplasm Collection in Salinas, California; and studying a new range improvement machine to improve surface conditions on valuable farmland in Miles City, Montana. Will Pemble reports. (274)

EXERCISE PERFORMANCE...USDA scientist Dr. William Evans talks about research at the Human Nutrition Research Center in Boston to study the affects of exercise on the elderly. Vic Powell interviews. (275)



FROM OUR RADIO
SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1528...(Weekly 13½ min documentary) On this edition Brenda Curtis visits the National Bonsai Collection at the National Arboretum and finds out some interesting facts about the ancient art of Bonsai gardening.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1517...(Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; Farm finances update; Farming near the Chesapeake Bay; Mariculture-A new industry.

CONSUMER TIME #1010...(Weekly reel of 2½-3 min features) New methods to measure body fat; Starting a home business; Fish--a healthy food; New Zealand venison to the U.S.?; Vitamins, minerals and their interaction.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE...Tues, Sept. 23, World ag. outlook; Weekly weather and crop report; Wed, Sept. 23, Agricultural resources--cropland, water and conservation report; Fri, Sept. 26, Economic indicators of the farm sector. Dial the USDA National News Line 202-488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. ET each working day.

OFF MIKE

Not one, not two, not three, but four softball games, all played back-to-back between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., that's what Roger Bernard (KROC, Rochester, Minn.) got involved in recently. It was all part of a media softball tournament played in Mason City, Iowa, involving radio, television and cable service employees in the northern Iowa/southern Minnesota area. Roger's comment, "We drove the 100 miles to Mason City, played the four games, and drove back. Long day!" Yes, we would agree ... Speaking of marathons (or at least something closely akin), Herb Plambeck, past NAFB president, on August 27 celebrated his 50th anniversary of his first farm broadcast. His first broadcast was on WHO, Des Moines, in 1936 and those broadcasts lasted for 33-1/2 years. He also spent time in Washington as a confidential assistant to the Secretary of Agriculture...plus lots more. (Herb says he's started his second 50 years in radio but doesn't want to be committed to finishing them.) Our congratulations! ... Stu Ellis (WSOY, Decatur, Ill.) has been selected for the two-year Illinois Leadership Development program. Nice going, Stu. And our thanks to Julie Terstriep (WLRB, Macomb, Ill.) for the tip ... We're holding our breath that our latest project will succeed. Sec'y of Agric Richard Lyng is in Uruguay for the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) talks (week of Sept. 15). We're hoping to conduct a telephone press conference with him and Clayton Yeutter, Ambassador for Trade (and, even possibly, Malcolm Baldrige, Sec'y of Commerce) toward the end of the week, potentially Thursday morning, maybe Friday morning. Phone line quality is the key. We won't set this up until Wednesday, so if you read this before mid-morning that day and would like to participate, call us at 202-447-4330 and we'll put you on. But don't delay. The limited slots will go fast ... Final note. Our thanks to Hugh Robinson (KKOW, Pittsburg, Kans.) for his one word evaluation for a recent NEWS FEATURE FIVE tape. That word? "Exceptional!"

JAMES L. JOHNSON, Chief, Radio and Television Division

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